

Milestone 2019



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MILESTONE

Volume 13 2019

Art & Literature Review

Creative Expressions of Western North Carolina Artists & Writers



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Mission Statement

Milestone is the biennial art and literature review published by Southwestern Community College. The purpose of this publication is to showcase the creative expressions of Western North Carolina artists and writers.

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All prose and poetry submissions are chosen via blind review.

While Southwestern Community College makes every effort to preserve *Milestone* contributors' freedom of expression, the works of art contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the values or beliefs of SCC faculty, staff, and administrators.

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Dedication

This edition of the *Milestone* is dedicated to Owen Gibby, retired and highly esteemed professor of SCC and one of the founders of this feat—in short: no Gibby, no *Milestone*. We carry on, along the path that he cleared.

Milestone

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JOSE GARCIA
WOLF ~ SCRATCHBOARD
FIRST PLACE ~ ART

We'll Get Used to Mexico

BETTY HOLT

FIRST PLACE ~ POETRY

The plane is late, we're walking to the gate
The raining is pouring down
Show our papers stand in line
The shuttle's here to take us out of this town
One small problem, my bag's not here
All I get is the runaround
Empty-handed, we finally go
But we'll get used to Mexico

So, San Miguel, here we come
Wish you weren't so cold and wet
Our house is cute, an artsy place
But the rain has not subsided yet
Fall into bed in a dreamless sleep
Woken by a rooster we haven't met
We huddle by the heater, so damp and cold
But we'll get used to Mexico

We go downtown to an artist's mall
Admire all the talent here
Have some soup and quiche for lunch
Get take-out pizza and two cold beers
At home the key is stuck in the lock
Two hours in the rain until it clears
I have dreams of going home
But we'll get used to Mexico

The toilet clogs, the oven won't work
No ice cubes for a morning drink
Can't get money without a passport
The toilet costs—it's crazy I think
We put the trash out—the can disappears
I'm going insane or on the brink
I'm slowly running out of dough
But we'll get used to Mexico

The Mexican people are sweet and kind
The days are sunny, the sky is blue
And if you speak some Español
There's always plenty to see and do
The market sells some unique crafts
Beautiful veggies and luscious fruit
The pace of everything is slow
But we'll get used to Mexico

Guanajuato, a colonial town
Filled with churches and silver mines
The area looks like the Southwest
To not see the charm, you must be blind
At La Gruta, lush hot springs there
Finally relaxation we find
Just a couple of naïve Gringos
But we'll get used to Mexico

We saw Bill Nellis, an American friend
He helped us figure out our day
And solved the problems with my computer
So we wouldn't have to pay
But that darn rooster's still up at three
We need a different place to stay
I'd like to throttle him when he crows
But we'll get used to Mexico

Have a wonderful dinner at Don Felix
Enjoy all the tacos there
But Perlina is up all night long
Running to the john—it isn't fair
I think I'm safe, doesn't happen to me
And then it does, oh, what a pair
Back and forth to the toilet we go
But we'll get used to Mexico

We catch the shuttle for a 1:00 flight
Sit on the runway forever
Something wrong with the exit door
The verdict: The plane's leaving never
A taxi comes the next day at 2 a.m.
Our ties with Mexico we're ready to sever
Finally we get on with the show
But we'll get used to Mexico

There's something said for a comfort zone
And something more to lose it
A time to rail against your fate
And a time to just excuse it
In life you can just hang back
Or you can jump and do it
Frustration and fun, to and fro
But we got used to Mexico

Cry for Lola

PATTY ANDREA

FIRST PLACE ~ SHORT STORY

"Lola has killed herself."

I can still hear my mother's words coming through the phone line like a thick resin that enveloped my heart. Breath was sucked out of me as I sat down hard on the floor. Lola has killed herself. Like a thing somebody does that is part of a normal day: has rented a car, has gone to the store, has changed her hair. Lola has...a present tense of something that already took place and cannot change.

Our home was nestled into the dunes above Lake Michigan, surrounded by cottages that are empty most of the year. Our dad had winterized our cottage in the early fifties, making our family the only people in the dunes from September to June. However, in summer the other cottages came alive with kids from cities like Detroit, St. Louis, Chicago, and Boston. We were small-town rubes compared to those city kids, and when Lola came into our lives, our world changed.

I was twelve and my sister Colette, ten the first time we met Lola. Warmed by the sun, we sat at our usual spot on the beach, a little dune surrounded by beach grass that protected us from chilly winds that blew across the big lake in early May. School had ended at noon that day and I was watching sunspots through my closed eyes, wondering if blind people can see sunspots, when I felt sand spraying all over me. Opening my eyes, I watched a figure cartwheel past me, land at the bottom of the little hill, exclaim "Ta-da!" and then fall down laughing. Colette and I exchanged glances, both wondering who had just invaded our private dune.

The girl had shoulder-length, layered hair like Keith Richards and holey jeans with velvet patches and peace signs embroidered on them. Dark blue suede Earth shoes with red shoelaces were on her feet. She climbed back up the hill and plopped down on our beach towel.

"I'm Lola." She pulled a crumpled pack of Kools out of her sand-covered sock and stuck one in her mouth. "Got a light?" Her green-eyed stare was unabashed.

"You smoke," I said dumbly, not really a question as much as a statement of amazement. I had never seen a kid smoke before.

"Oh, I've been smoking a long time now." She reached into the pocket of her Levi's and pulled out a book of matches. "Ahh, never mind, got one." She lit it like she'd done it a thousand times before, cupping the match in her hands to keep the wind from blowing it out.

"How old are you?" Colette asked.

"Eleven, but I'll be twelve in January," Lola said through a flourish of smoke. "I usually smoke Newports, but I ran out. Found these in the glove compartment of Grandma's car. Want one?"

"I'll just have a puff of yours." I didn't want to be one-upped by someone younger. I wondered if this girl could be part of a band of gypsies passing through our little town. (I'd read about gypsies.) Or maybe she was the daughter of one of the carnies, here months before the carnival came to town for some reason.

Colette looked at me. "You don't smoke."

We'd finally gotten past the stage of telling on each other, which we realized was a no-win endeavor, so I wasn't afraid she'd tell on me. "Yeah, I sometimes smoke Dad's." I didn't, but once in a while I'd take a butt from the ashtray and parade about.

Lola handed me the cigarette, and I puffed on it and held the smoke in my mouth. It tasted like mint and burning leaves. I let the smoke slide out between my lips, slowly like a serpent. Lola did not chide me for not inhaling.

Lola was spending the summer at the cottage of her great-grandma, an old lady who came from Detroit every year and swam in the lake no matter how cold it was. Colette and I knew all the regular summer kids in the cottages, so it was surprising we'd never seen Lola, but my mother knew of her. Eavesdropping on the stairs, I learned Lola's father had been caught with drugs in California, and while he was in prison, her parents divorced. Lola's young, wild mother had decided to send her to great-grandma's cottage to get her out of the way.

My mother did not like Lola but was not the type of person to say so outright. When school was out for the summer, Colette and I would find long lists of chores on the breakfast table, my mother's way of keeping us from getting into trouble. However, Lola was resourceful and helped find ways to get things done in a hurry. A few well-placed vacuum tracks looked like we'd vacuumed the whole house (no need to even plug it in!). The blow dryer blew dust off tables without lifting a thing. The not-too-soiled laundry was taken out of the dirty clothes hamper and hung back in closets or folded neatly back into dressers. We could be out on the beach or traipsing the streets in an hour's time or less.

Our behavior was mostly harmless, but sometimes our curiosity got the better of us. For example, we found summer cottages with unlocked windows allowing us inside to explore. Our first fight was after we found a stash of money—100 dollars!!—that I said we should leave and Lola thought we should take. We had been arguing for ten minutes when we heard voices and the lock on the front door turning. She grabbed my hand and tugged me through to the kitchen, unlocking the back door and pulling me off the porch, sending us tumbling down the sandy hill, giggling all the way. Later, Lola handed me fifty bucks and said, "We earned it."

The old lodge on the beach had a pinball machine, and Lola showed how to get free games. We had to raise it up with books, gradually so that it wouldn't tilt, and then get the ball to roll into one of the little holes that racked up points. The ball wouldn't come out if we kept the machine almost flat. While it racked up games—Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!—we'd sit on the sun porch and play Canasta. Our record was 58 free games. Helen, the old lady that owned the lodge, never bothered us much. We hauled her groceries down to the kitchen for a nickel apiece, which we promptly spent in her pop machine. She and her sister would disappear behind the door that said "PRIVATE—NO ENTRY" and drink whiskey highballs all afternoon. Once in a while, though, Helen would get mean and kick us out for no apparent reason—her big, black cat-eye glasses flashing in the bright lights of the pinball machine, her orange lipstick smeared around her fleshy mouth. Lola would laugh and talk back, slurring her words and crossing her eyes, but Helen scared me when she was like that.

One late August day, we discovered we could climb from the boardwalk onto the roof of one of the cottages. We sat and stared at the lake as Lola tugged at one of the roof shingles. It peeled off easily. She flicked her wrist, sending the shingle flying like a Frisbee onto the road below that ran along the lake. She peeled another and let it fly.

"I don't think we should do that," I cautioned. "It could wreck the roof."

Lola just looked at me with her wicked smile. "Let's see if I can hit a car!"

She could. We stayed hidden behind a little dormer so that even when the cars stopped to see what had hit them, they couldn't figure out where the object had come from.

We were bored with the game after a half hour or so and sat quietly again. The next thing we knew, two cops were on the roof with us, telling us we were under arrest. One of us had sliced a guy's cheek open as he drove by in his convertible, but after learning we were just a couple of young girls, he decided not to press charges. Still, I was grounded for the rest of the summer. Baby arrest.

The summer I turned sixteen, Lola showed up with a guy named Blue; she told my mom he was her cousin. We told my parents we were going to her aunt's house in Grand Rapids, but we didn't stop until we reached Detroit, Lola's old stomping grounds. I had been learning big-city ways from Lola for four years, a lifetime for a teenager: my first real drink, the first time I snuck out of the house, my first joint. Lola made my boring, teenage life exciting. I felt like I had a secret nobody else in my little town knew about.

At a dilapidated Victorian covered in painted peace signs, Picasso-esque animals, and rainbows, Lola introduced me to her friends as Blue pulled her off to a room. "Everybody, that's Claire, my best friend from nowhere...be nice to her."

"Hi, I'm Robby," said a guy with long, blond hair as he handed me a joint. He got me beers, put his arm around me, and told me how beautiful I was as he began to kiss me. I was both flattered and frightened by his attention, but soon a tall, thin woman with long, red hair in braids told Robby to "fuck off". She said she was Audrey, took me to the kitchen, fed me Lucky Charms, and told me about the horses she grew up with. I told her about my own passion for horses and how big my disappointment was every Christmas when I asked for a horse and unwrapped small ceramic horses. She smiled and told me there were worse things.

Finally, Lola came out of the room, her eyes bright and hair wild. She ate cereal with me and talked animatedly about where Blue had traveled and how he'd told her that he would take her to Colorado one day. Audrey listened but said nothing.

Blue came through the kitchen and kissed the top of Lola's head. "Gotta' run, little baby," he told her and was gone in an instant.

We slept on the living room floor that night. In the morning, Audrey drove us to the bus station and bought us tickets home.

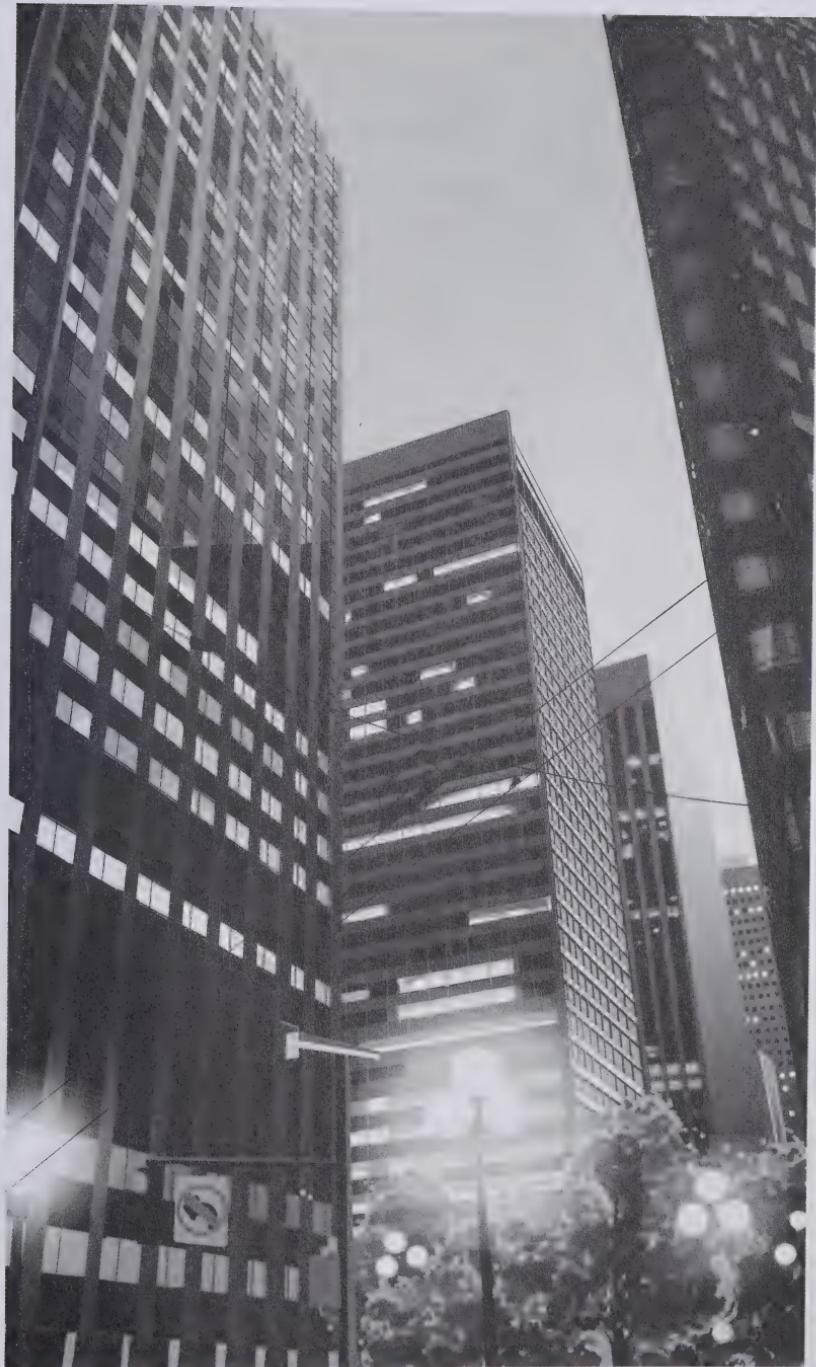
On the bus, I asked Lola how long she'd known Blue and where she'd met him, but she was irritable and didn't want to talk. Halfway home, she told me that Blue was a nihilist who believed everyone should just do whatever they want. He told her there was no God, and although I didn't want to believe her, I looked in her eyes and knew she was right.

On the phone, I could hear my mother breathing raggedly, and her voice was shaky when she said, "That girl was never any good for you and now look what she's done."

As she said this, the dam broke and her tears were so wretched, so grief-stricken that I could only sit on the floor, saying nothing. Stunned, I looked around the tiny space that was my first apartment, which Lola would never see: the fresh, green paint on the walls that I had picked to match Lola's eyes; the big, leopard-print floor pillows from the second-hand store that I had found to match Lola's wild spirit; the plants I was growing from cuttings in their purple pots.

"It's okay, Mama, it's okay," I finally said softly into the phone. "It's all going to be okay."

I would not know for many years why my mother would cry for Lola, a girl she never liked.



RADIANCE RAMIREZ
SAN FRANCISCO ~ ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR
SECOND PLACE ~ ART

Milestone

Art & Literature Review 2019

Fractals

DIANA JURSS
SECOND PLACE ~ POETRY

Back in my college years my friends and I would have lively discussions. We'd smoke joints, then head to the Sweet Shop for coffee and toasted bagels. We debated...Which is the primary science—physics or chemistry? Decades later, after finding Escher-like stairs behind a trap door, I ascended, (or descended), twelve steps to a new classroom. There it dawned on me. It's neither! It's math!

First was One, then lines, shapes, and time.
Addition, then division, rotation, pine
cones, the curve of waves. Not the imaginary little i.

Rather great change, puzzling and powerful. It became solid and took form. In the window, bold and golden, grows a sunflower.

At the same school, a tiny fellow under the sea works at a frenzied pace. Fast on his abacus, his pebbles move with swift precision. Grains of sand his beads. The Nautilus constructs his shell one chamber at a time, but he is not original. He is not alone. High above in the sky's night the Pinwheel Galaxy predates his calculus. A spiral galaxy, its curved arms extend in luminous symmetry around a radiant center.

An indeterminable constant motions us to pause, to bend.
Examine the classroom again. Observe the colors,
the glossy blues of the shell, the golden sand,
the right angles of the door, the wheel's slow turn,
red stars, spiral arms that wrap tightly then spread.
A mirror, framed in almond wood, hangs on the wall.
It reflects a hazy image.

I graduated you know. Most of my friends as well. Today the Sweet Shop doesn't look the same. The price of bagels has changed too. I figure one can search in two different ways; the rate at which the known amount changes, or, what's left after a certain rate of change. Either way it's beautiful, and the coffee tastes the same, good, very good.

Glen

ROBERT BOYD SATTERWHITE
SECOND PLACE ~ SHORT STORY

He poured the last of the beer into his glass, hardly more than a swallow and warm. Bill, the bartender, picked up the empty bottle by the neck, tilted it toward the light, and wagged it.

"Last call."

"How's my credit?" Glen asked.

Bill shook his head and dropped the bottle in the trash can. Glen felt in his pocket for change and pulled out a tattered book of matches and three pennies. A nickel was lodged inside the matchbook.

"Tell you what," Glen said. "I'll match you for a beer."

He flipped the nickel with his thumb, caught it, slapped it on the bar, and covered it with his hand. Bill laughed.

"Hell, Glen. How you going to pay if you lose?"

"I don't plan to lose. But if I do, I'll pay you double tomorrow."

Bill reached into his tip jar for a coin.

"Okay. I'll play. Call it."

"Just like you," Glen said.

Bill flipped his coin and let it fall on the bar. Glen lifted his hand.

"Hmmmff," Bill said, looking at the pair of heads. "Let me see that."

He grabbed the nickel, looked at both sides.

"Guess you get one on the house."

Glen pocketed the nickel and quickly drank the beer. He wiped his mouth on his sleeve and smiled.

"Preciate it."

Outside, he hunched his shoulders in the cool night air and looked up the deserted street. A breeze teased the fringed leaves of the mimosa trees lining the square. He'd been in the tavern most of the afternoon and evening, and he wasn't even drunk, just broke and beat. He needed a place to lie down for a while, and, as much as he disliked the idea, the only place left to go this time of night was Mrs. Riley's, the house he and his family shared with the old woman. He hadn't been back since Edna and the boys had left. He wished he had enough money to get a room in town, but he knew if he had money, he'd buy a bottle and let it take care of the rest of the night. Maybe he could slip in without waking Mrs. Riley. He just wasn't in the mood to argue about the rent. He was flat broke, and it looked as if he'd be that way for a while.

"Damnit it all," he said.

He needed a clean shirt, underwear, and socks, and, most of all, a couple of hours of sleep in a bed instead of on the hard benches at the bus station. He'd get up early, while she was still asleep, go to the depot, hop a freight to Charlotte or somewhere, find a job, and get straightened out.

When he reached the edge of town, he settled into a steady gait, stepping off the two-lane blacktop and sticking out his thumb when a car passed but not really expecting anyone to pick him up this time of night and not caring.

Everything had gone bad. The drinking had gotten away from him again, and Edna and the boys were gone. The wheel would eventually turn, he knew. It always did. He couldn't let a little run of bad luck get him down. He had to dig in his heels and tough it out.

When he reached Mrs. Riley's, he stopped at the edge of the yard and studied the house. The windows were dark, and the house looked so empty, it made him shiver. He decided not to stay. It would make him feel too sad. He'd get a few things, walk back to town, spend the rest of the night in the bus station, and head out in the morning. Any place would be better than staying here.

Glen crossed the yard and quietly entered the kitchen through the unlocked door on the breezeway. He found a grocery bag and flashlight on top of the refrigerator and tiptoed down the hallway, the old floorboards creaking with each step. He stopped at the boys' room and shined the light on the two iron cots. An odd odor hung in the air, something akin to spoiled fruit. As he looked at the empty cots, a feeling of such sadness overcame him that tears filled his eyes.

He went to his and Edna's room, took clothes out of the old chest of drawers, changed to a clean shirt, and stuffed the grocery bag with underwear, socks, and another shirt, cringing as the drawer banged slightly when he closed it. He switched off the flashlight and sat on the edge of the bed. The room seemed alien, as if he had never been there. Even the old bed where he and Edna had conceived their two boys seemed strangely unfamiliar. He thought of Edna and shook his head as if to rid his mind of her memory.

He heard a door open, and light spilled into the room from the hallway.

"Who's there?" Mrs. Riley called out.

He didn't answer. He heard her shuffling down the hallway toward the room.

"Glen, is at you?"

Suddenly, the room filled with light. He shielded his eyes with his hand.

"Hahh!" she said. "You scared me. I thought I heard something. What're you doing?"

Glen stared at the floor.

"What you got there?" she asked, looking at the bag and moving toward the bed.

She reached for the bag. Glen pushed it out of her reach.

"You ain't taking nothin from this house till you pay your rent, mister. You owe me for three months."

Glen stood up. "I owe you for two months. I'm moving out. Right now. You can have the furniture."

"I don't want your sorry furniture. It ain't worth nothin. I want what you owe me. Three months."

"I told you I'm moving out. Now."

"You still owe me two months plus part of this month."

"Nobody's even been here this month."

"That don't matter. You still owe me. All your stuff's been here."

"You can kiss my ass is what you can do."

Glen picked up the bag, and she grabbed for it. When he jerked the bag away, it tore, spilling his clothes on the bed.

"Stop messing with me, old woman," he said, picking up the scattered clothes.

Mrs. Riley backed up and stood blocking the doorway, hands clamped on her hips. "You just wait a minute, mister. I want what's owed me, and I aim to get it, or I'm calling the law."

"You can call the president for all I care." Glen crammed clothes into the torn bag. "Get out of my way." He pushed her aside and walked out of the bedroom.

"Don't you be shoving me around, you sorry excuse for a man," she yelled, following him down the hall, pounding his back with her fists.

Glen turned suddenly, grabbed her by the throat with his right hand, and squeezed. She gasped.

"I'll break your stinking neck if you don't stop it." He squeezed until she gagged. "You hear me?"

He could see the yellowed, bloodshot whites of her eyes. She nodded. He released his grip and shoved her to the floor. Before he could get away, she grabbed his leg and began screaming, her shrill voice raking his nerves like the jagged edge of a crosscut saw.

"Turn loose, damnit."

He dropped the bag, leaned down, grabbed her hair, jerked her head back, and slapped her hard across the mouth. She touched her mouth with her fingertips and stared at him wide-eyed.

"You're crazy. Crazy."

"I'd talk if I was you," Glen said.

He picked up the bag and walked quickly down the hall and out the kitchen door. Halfway across the yard he heard the screen door slam. Mrs. Riley yelled at him from the breezeway.

"I'm getting the law on you, mister. You tried to kill me. I'm notifying the sheriff. You hear me, Glen?"

"Go to hell," Glen said over his shoulder.

He heard a loud boom and felt fiery stings on his shoulder and right side. At first, he had the odd notion that he'd been attacked by yellow jackets, and he slapped at his shoulder to brush them away. When he looked at his hand, it was wet and dark.

"Damn," he said, realizing what had happened.

He hit the ground belly down when he heard the metallic click of another shell being shucked into the shotgun's chamber. The second blast hit the old utility shed in front of him. Glen scrambled to his feet and sprinted into the woods as pellets from a third blast sprayed the bushes and trees around him.

"Godamighty."

When he was a safe distance from the house, he stopped, pulled off his shirt, lighted a match, and looked at his bloody shoulder and side. "I'm bleeding like a stuck hog."

He carefully touched the area where the pellets had hit and could feel hard lumps under his skin. He wasn't badly hurt, but his shoulder and side were full of bird shot.

"Damn bitch."

He leaned his uninjured shoulder against the trunk of a pine. He had dropped the bag of clothes in the yard. He carefully wiped his shoulder and side with the shirt and put it on. The bleeding had stopped, but his entire right side ached.

He sat beneath the pine for more than an hour, went to the edge of the woods, and, staying in the shadows of the trees, looked at the house. No lights showed. He eased across the yard in a crouch, reached for the bag of clothes, hesitated, and went instead to the breezeway.

"You damned old hag, you ain't getting away with this."

He picked up a five-gallon kerosene can next to the wall on the breezeway, shook it, and heard liquid slosh. About a gallon or so, he figured. He carried the can around the side of the house to the front porch, screwed off the cap, and poured kerosene on the edge of the planks. The liquid spread over the porch to Mrs. Riley's rocking chair, making "glunnnk, glunnnk" noises as it poured from the can's spout. Tossing the empty can under the house,

he stood beneath Mrs. Riley's bedroom window at the edge of the porch and rapped on the glass.

"Who's at?" Mrs. Riley called out, her voice tight with alarm.

He struck a match, shielded it with cupped hands until he had a steady flame, lighted the rest of the matches, and tossed the flaming matches on the wet, shiny area at the edge of the porch. He stepped back as the fuel flared in a sudden "whooooff." Half the porch flamed.

He could hear her yelling as he walked unhurriedly across the yard, picked up the bag of clothes, and headed for the road, expecting anytime to hear the shotgun blasting. He didn't care.

When he reached the main road, he could still see the light from the fire. Without looking back, he settled into a steady gait toward town.



DARE TOWE
WINE NOT
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR



THEO HOYLE
TIME
PHOTOGRAPHY

Swim

GEORGE FRIZZELL

I love the rain
the sound it makes
'cause you always looked great
walking in the mist

it reminded me of the time
when we first kissed
at a waterfall
high upon a mountain

the rain or mist
doesn't matter if the water's
hot
or if it's cold
and while I could stand with you
beneath a waterfall
I could never cross a sea

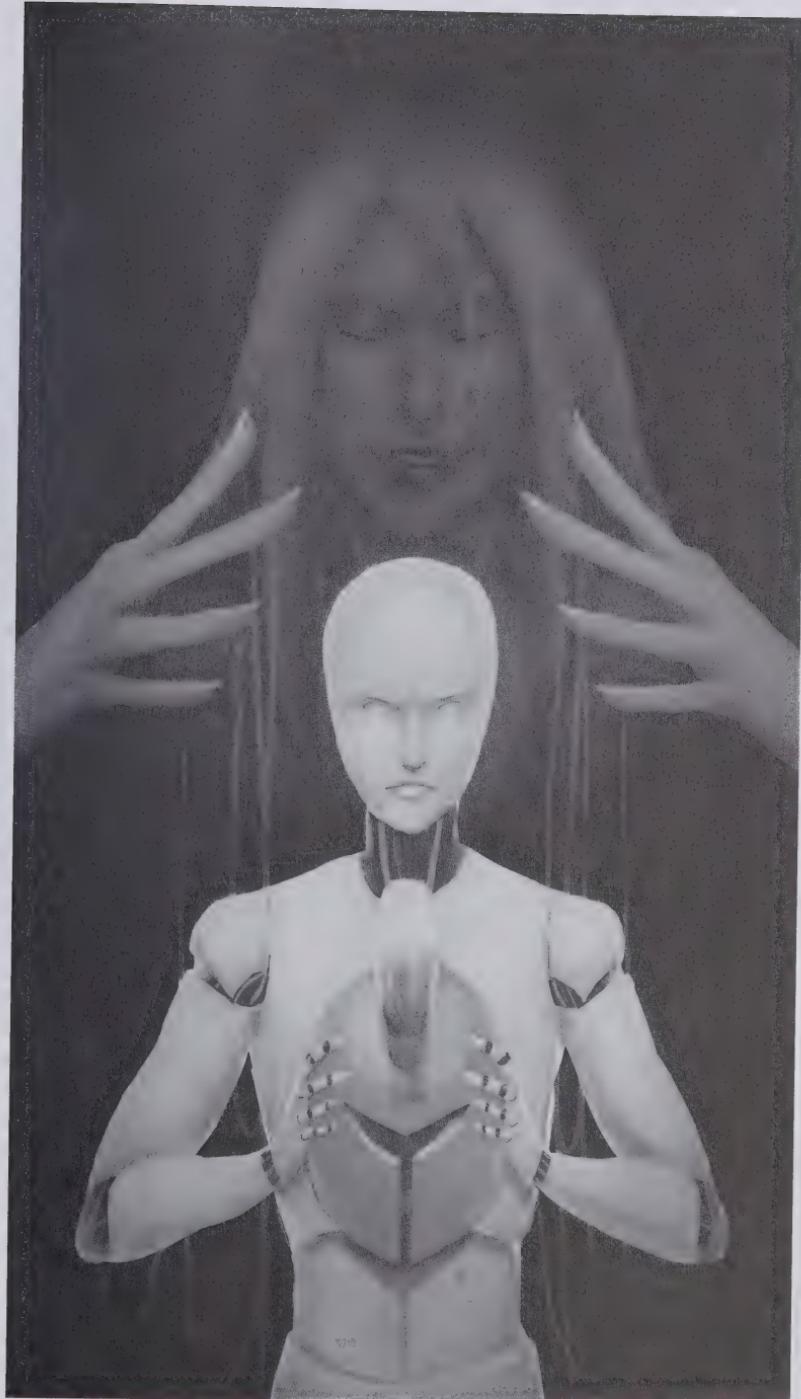
give me something
to hold on to
as the water rushes round me
as you sink from view
was it something I didn't tell you
was it something that I missed
in the driving rain

I tried to put you first
but I never was immersed

I never learned
to swim



MATT GAUCK
STAR THROWER



ABIGALE CORBETT
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Stoned Bird

JAMES WILLIAMS III

The bird said to the rock with glee

"Look at me. I'm free because I can fly."

The rock replied "So I see."

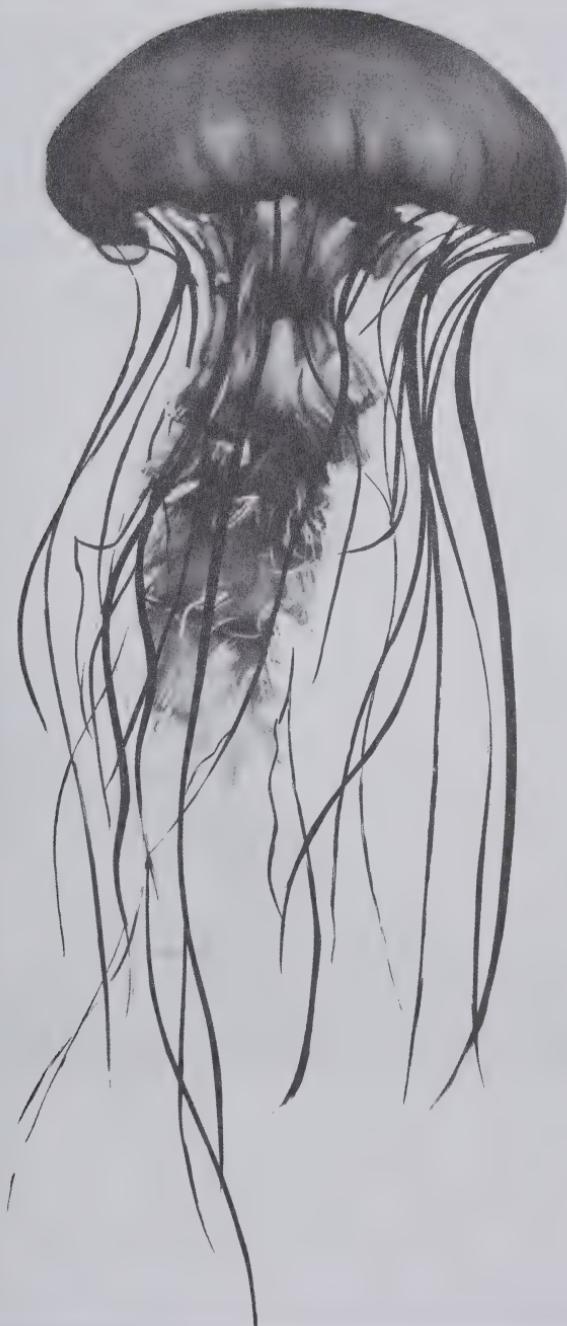
"Look at me. I am free for I can never die."



CAITLYN FRENCH
DARK FEATHERS BRING DARK TIDINGS
WATERCOLOR



KRISTINE GEE
PHOTOGRAPHY



TAYLOR LYNN
STINGER
AIRBRUSH



THEO HOYLE
OBSERVATION
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP PAINTING

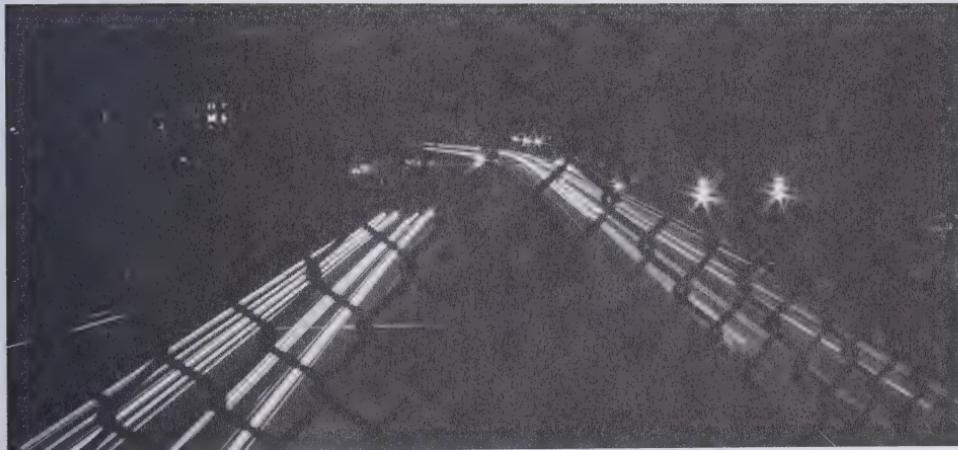
Questions

DUSTIN ROCHE

Lately I've been asking an awful lot of questions,
They keep me up late at night when I probably should be resting,
 What is the meaning of life and how did we get here?
 Instead it's Facebook likes and follows up on Twitter,
 Now the only way to adapt is to add apps,
 Stay with the trends and buy the newest crap,
 They didn't give a damn, at least that's what I thought,
 We're all on borrowed time you probably thought you bought,
 Protection of borders and flags that's our main obsession,
 Are there any flags when we die and find ourselves in heaven?
 Why are people killing over paper, to me it doesn't make cents?
 How can I get ahead next week's check is already spent?
 Republicans or Democrats, who is the next selection?
 Neither have it figured out but haven't learned our lesson,
 Time to lay my head to rest tomorrow should be better,
 I know change should come in time nothing lasts forever



KARYSSA YOUNG
CITY OF THE LOST
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR



EMILY ALLIGOOD
PASSING TIME
PHOTOGRAPHY

The Hound

ROBERT BOYD SATTERWHITE

He stopped at the Super-Mart, went inside, and bought a container of Skoal, pausing at the entrance on his way out to check for job postings. Nothing, only a sign: "We Buy Ramps." Stuffing his cheek with tobacco, he went to his truck and headed out of town, turning off the four-lane onto a two-lane blacktop that ended at a narrow, graveled Forest Service road. A small, bold creek flowed beside the road, switching from side to side under one-lane bridges. Summer houses along the creek were empty because it was early April. He drove until he found a place to park beside the creek and pulled over.

In the back of his truck was a skinny female hound, her teats swollen, full of milk. A burlap bag held her five puppies, only a week old. The sack was fastened at the top with twine. He lifted the hound from the truck bed and laid her on the side of the road in the dead grass and leaf litter. She looked up at him with sad eyes; nuzzled his hand with her hot, dry nose; licked his fingers once; and lowered her head. He looked away, gently stroking her.

"You know, don't you?"

The puppies squirmed inside the sack, making mewing noises that reminded him of the sound kittens make.

"Sorry, old girl," he said. "I'm truly sorry. Can't buy dog food with food stamps."

With the hound watching him all the while, he took a .22 rifle from a rack in back of the cab, placed the barrel against her head for a moment, moved it aside, and spat a stream of tobacco juice.

"Damnit," he said. "Don't look at me."

She lowered her head, placing it between her two front paws. He lifted the rifle and once again lowered it.

"Maybe if I just leave you, somebody will take pity on you."

He looked across the stream to a sloping bank, green with thick growths of flat, broad-leaved plants.

"Well, I'll be damned. Ramps."

He placed the rifle back in the rack, got the sack, walked back to the stream, and threw the sack into a pool below him. Not waiting for it to sink, he got in his truck and drove upstream to a spot wide enough to turn around.

When he reached the place where he had left the hound, she wasn't there. He stopped, got out, and looked down the bank at the pool. The hound lay on the side of the stream, the wet sack nestled against her belly. She looked up at him.

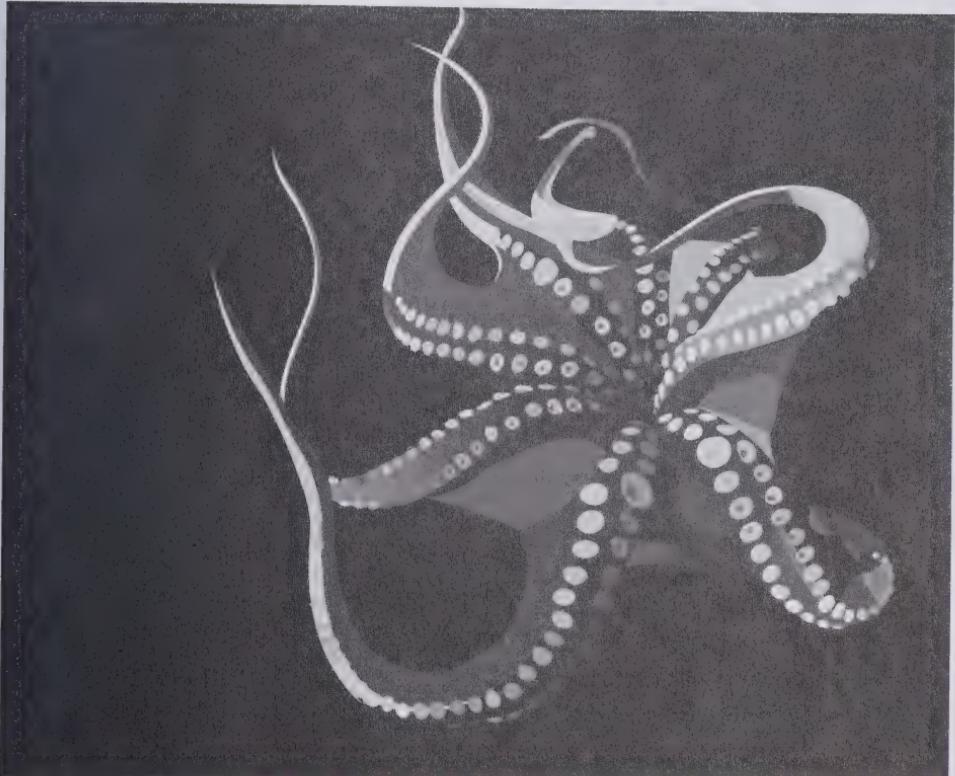
"Damn," he said.

He made his way down the bank, picked her up, and carried her to the truck and laid her in the truck bed. He retrieved the sack and dumped the puppies beside the hound. The puppies were wet, their hair matted, all alive. They quickly crawled to the hound and began nursing.

He took the empty sack, went down the bank, crossed the stream, and pulled clusters of ramps from the damp soil. The white bulbs came out easily. When the sack was full, he went to the truck, placed the sack on the seat beside him, and drove to town.



KHORIE MILLER
1980s PLANE CRASH
PHOTOGRAPHY



SARAH DOOLEY
WELL ARMED
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

Midway

GEORGE FRIZZELL

Everything became a footnote
a memory loop
a déjà vu
desperate to find a last original thought

It was a circus ride
the ponies going up and down
on the merry-go-round
the Ferris wheel turning and turning
lifting from the ground
but then ever descending

Finally,
as the carnival ended
a man guessed our fortune,
and
the little, yellow rubber duckies
floated down
a channel
with only one holding a winning number

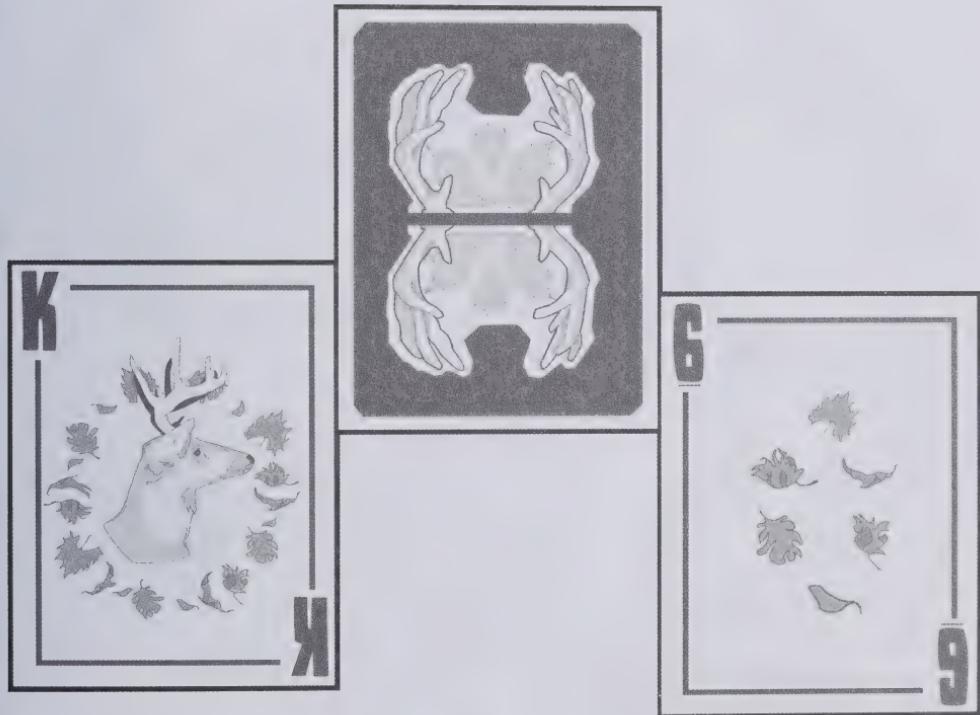
We lost then;
still,
at least I thought,
at least I dreamed,
not the best
but vivid in the night,
my last original thought
that I loved you
as I still do



HEATHER SITTON
CLOWNING AROUND
PENCIL ILLUSTRATION



MATT GAUCK
FOREVER UPWARD



ROBERT NELSON

ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR



TEENA AMSLER
TECHNICALLY BEAUTIFUL
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

Something about Skulls

JAMES WILLIAMS III

When you look into someone's eyes, it has been said you are gazing into their soul. There is, it seems, something intimate about two gazes meeting. You are focused on I, and I on you. A connection like a private channel. It is as if you slip on some headphones and engage in a conversation only the other can hear. The rest of the world fades away to nothing at all as two gazes meet. Drawn like magnets to those colourful orbs affixed in the other's head. When those orbs are directed elsewhere, we wonder where they look. We follow their gaze believing that they know something that we do not. The eyes are the organs of curiosity. They fulfill the curiosity in ourselves while simultaneously evoking that curiosity in others. We gaze into one another in wonder of what lies beyond that impenetrably clear veil of the pupil. Perhaps if I gaze long enough, I will see a thought glimmer to the surface of that great wondrous abyss.

Faces give us wonder, but when the face is laid bare and we see the grin beneath, we recognize a face yet can wonder no longer. We see clearly all that is and can no longer wonder as to what lies beneath. We gaze into these empty sockets and see, in horrid fascination, nothing. No eyes to indicate a fascination with us. And so, almost as if making up for the lack of interest given to us, we are intrigued by skulls. Where the soul would be, we see a black shadow cast in the void of what used to be. All that's left is a curiosity that will forever remain unanswered. Living attention is directed by the eyes, but with a lack of eyes, skulls only reflect it. People look at you, look away, and return your gaze whereas a skull only gazes at you when you gaze at it. Perhaps we do see the glimmers of thoughts in the eyes of others and it is the lack of this glimmer that so unnerves us about skulls.



EMILY ALLIGOOD
DOWNTOWN
PHOTOGRAPHY



GEOFFERY WADE
PHOTOGRAPHY

Let's Dance

First Written on a cold wispy morning on December 23, 2016

AARON COOMBS

My beloved, tonight it is more than perfect, the zephyr winds sing sweetly your name and the crystal stars shine like your earrings. As the White Mountains glint gracefully, and the wind speaks over our fingers, upon our balcony, let's dance, my beloved.

Now over the thousand streams and star crystals in the air,
You can see our prayers fill up the milky rivers in the sky.
Below the lights of Christmas, before the blue rivers of stars,
let's dance like the shadows and the circles of the moonlight.

Now dreams rise over like the wind and shine so easily
But time falls quickly, and worries fall away so slowly.
So let the rage of your fears dance around and under your legs.
For the world is falling asleep, calling for the colors of their dreams.

So let the tresses of your hair fall freely,
And the wind of your perfume
Soak up the flames of your heart.
Spinning like the starlight, tasting every feeling,
Let the steel blue sky and its stars fall all around you.

Dance wildly, my beloved, let's dance like the songbird who sings,
let's dance forever, until we wash into the skyline of our dreams.



ABIGALE CORBETT
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP



RADIANCE RAMIREZ
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP



TEENA AMSLER
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY BEST FRIEND
STIPPLE ILLUSTRATION



KARYSSA YOUNG
HEAVEN ON EARTH
PHOTOGRAPHY

Rock Talk

MICHAEL REVERE

A rock can make
a perfect rocket.

From beginning of time
to present day.

From top of highest mountain
to bottom of deepest ocean,
rocks are the only
complete true historians
on earth.

The ten commandments
were chisel burned in rock.

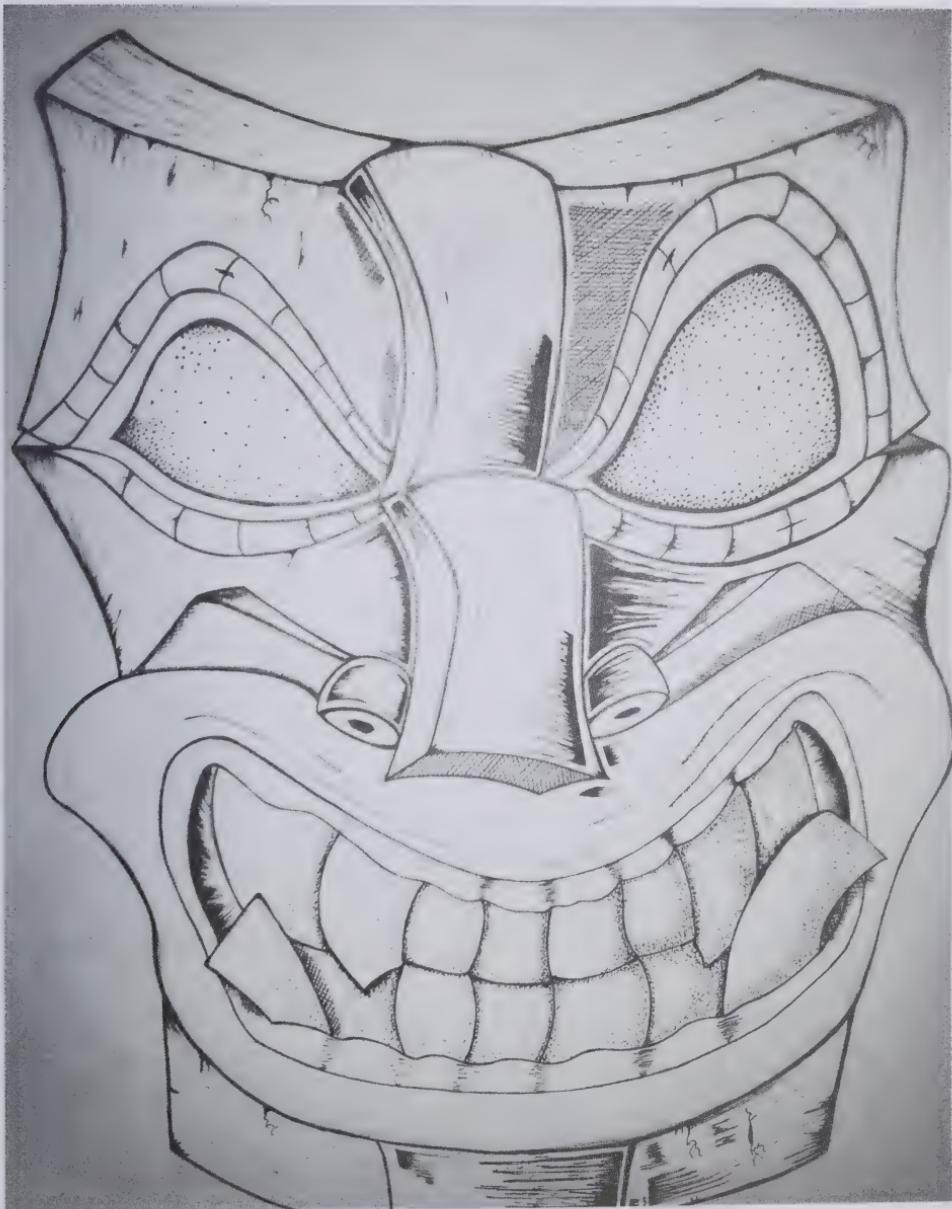
Rocks from deep space
help shape the existence
of life forms on earth
from north pole to south pole.

The All Mighty can throw
burning rocks
from deep space
hitting a target
the size of a silver dollar
on the blue planet.

Rocks have a silent voice
That is perfectly clear;
you do not need ears
to hear.



KATLIN MOSS
SERENE
PEN & INK ILLUSTRATION



GEOFFERY WADE
PEN & INK ILLUSTRATION

Lonely

MARGARET MARR

Sitting lonely,
in a Pizza Hut booth,
a male across several tables
catches my attention.

In work boots and jeans, he rises
and strolls by.

The need to feel wrapped up in
strong masculine arms
leaves me bereft.

He passes by, oblivious.



KERRIGAN BEAUCHEMIN
MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE
PHOTOGRAPHY



JENNIFER MAYNOR
KING OF BEAST
PHOTOGRAPHY



LINNEAH TAYLOR
THE LURKING LEOPARD
PENCIL ILLUSTRATION



CARLEE MOFFITT
PETALS
PHOTOGRAPHY

A Spider Today

GEORGE FRIZZELL

I watched a spider today

She spun a web
 perfect
 long silken strings,
 a welcoming orb
and I thought,
 do spiders have a Rembrandt,
 a Jackson Pollock,
 O'Keeffe or Picasso?

It was so precise
 but abstract against the sky

The next morning
 the dew caught the details;
that evening
 she basked in the setting sun
 content,
then retired to her corner retreat
 to await
 her fortuitous company

This Tremendous Fear

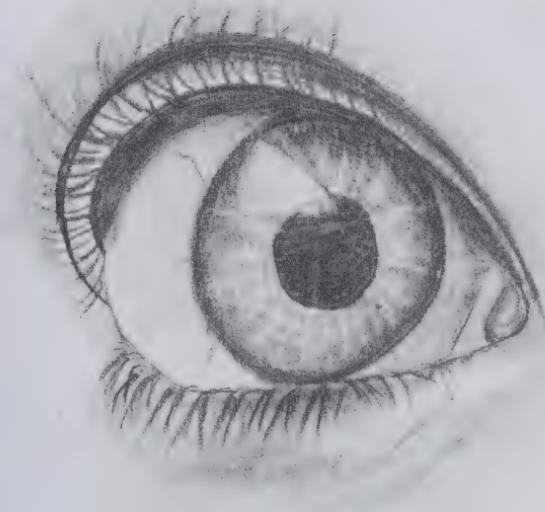
LINNEAH TAYLOR

I have this tremendous fear
that I will break down in public
that I will have nowhere to go
that everyone will see me

I have this tremendous fear
that I will have an anxiety attack
that I won't make it to the bathroom
that I will pass out before everyone's eyes

I have this tremendous fear
that I will have a heart attack sensation
that I will be unable to breathe and will turn blue
that I will throw up in front of the public's view

I have this tremendous fear
That at any moment I will have a panic attack



ERIC SORRELLS
AN EYE FOR AN EYE
PENCIL ILLUSTRATION



JOSE GARCIA
PHOTOGRAPHY



KATHY WILSON
SNOW-COVERED WALK
PHOTOGRAPHY

What It's Like

LINNEAH TAYLOR

It's like having eyes
but not being able to see

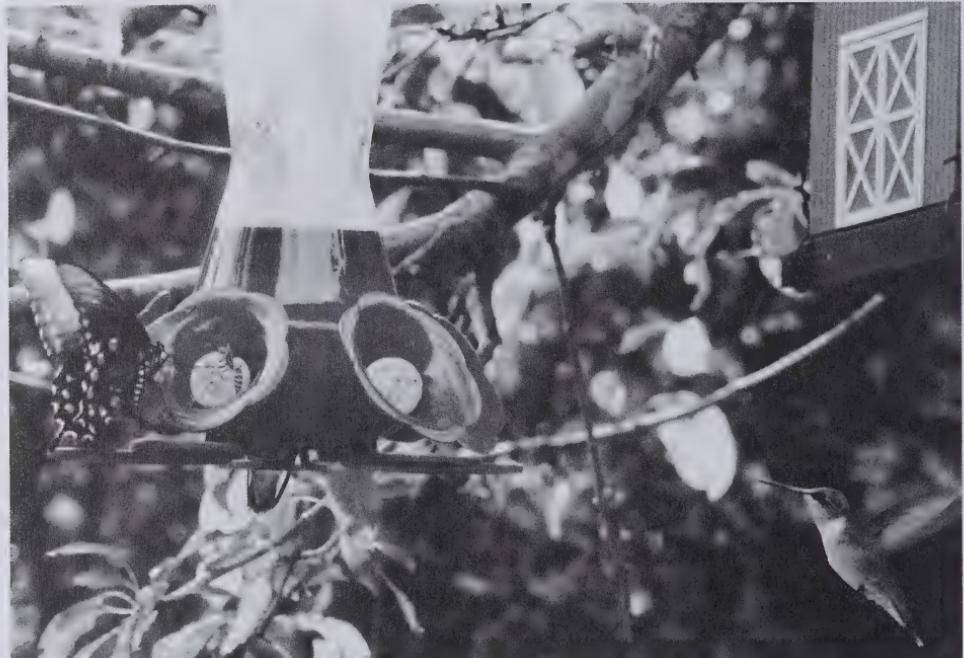
It's like having ears
but not being able to hear

It's like having legs
but not being able to walk

That's what it's like
living with depression



DANA DIMANTOVA
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR



VITA NATIONS
BIRD, BEE, AND BUTTERFLY
PHOTOGRAPHY



PAIGE CLOUSE
SLOFFEE TIME
ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR

Call for Submissions

Manuscripts for the 2021 edition of SCC *Milestone* will be accepted through **December 3, 2020**. In the event that funding is not secured for publication, submissions will be held and considered for the next issue.

Each submission should include the author's name, address, and phone number on the first page. Essays, local history, poetry, and short stories—as well as black-and-white artwork—may be submitted. All submissions should be typed, and it is requested that prose be limited to two thousand (2,000) words.

Seven individuals whose manuscripts or works of art are selected for publication also will receive certificate recognition:

- Cover
- First and second prize in poetry
- First and second prize in prose
- First and second prize in artwork

Should any of these individuals be currently enrolled SCC students, they will receive (in addition to the certificate) a monetary prize.

SCC students, faculty, staff, and alumni—along with residents of Macon, Swain, and Jackson counties and the Qualla Boundary—may submit to *SCC Milestone*.

Submission Contacts:

- **Poetry and prose submissions:**

milestone@southwesterncc.edu, or call 828.339.4463 if you have questions.

- **Artwork submissions:**

milestone@southwesterncc.edu, or call 828.339.4317 if you have questions.

- **General information:**

Contact Southwestern Community College's Public Relations Office at 828.339.4394.



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